

Message Text

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INFO WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017554

TOVIP 14 FOR S/S-WOLF

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PPDC, PFOR, IC

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: VICE PRESIDENT

MONDALE'S STOP IN ICELAND

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTS BACKGROUND PAPER PROVIDED
VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE. END SUMMARY.

1.SETTING: PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON, FOREIGN
MINISTRY PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY BJORNASON AND
DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL BJARNSON OF THE PM'S OFFICE
WILL JOURNEY THE 35 MILES FROM REYKJAVIK TO KEFLAVIK
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO WELCOME YOU DURING YOUR REFUELING
STOP ENROUTE TO TOKYO (BIO PROFILES AT PARA 5).

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YOUR WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH ICELANDIC OFFICIALS HAS
BEEN WELL RECEIVED AND SEEN AS A WARM GESTURE TOWARD
A SMALL NATO ALLY. A FIFTEEN MINUTE MEETING IS
ANTICIPATED IN VIEW OF THE BREVITY AND COURTESY NATURE
OF THE VISIT.

KEFLAVIK IS THE LOCATION OF THE US MILITARY BASE

IN ICELAND AND THE AIRPORT SERVES ICELANDIC CIVIL AVIATION AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN FORCES. THE APPROXIMATELY 3000 US MILITARY PERSONNEL PLUS A SMALL NUMBER OF ICELANDIC

CIVILIANS WHO MAN THE BASE PERFORM FUNCTIONS RANGING FROM SURVEILLANCE AND AIR DEFENSE TO COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH/RESCUE OPERATIONS.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ICELAND ARE CURRENTLY VERY GOOD ALTHOUGH THEY BECAME STRAINED DURING THE MOST RECENT COD WAR WITH THE UK WHEN WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT OVER THE ALLEGED FAILURE OF NATO AND THE US TO COME TO ICELAND'S AID PRODUCED STRONG PRESSURE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ICELAND FROM NATO AND REMOVAL OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. WHILE THESE POLITICAL PRESSURES HAVE SUBSIDED FOLLOWING RESOLUTION OF FISHERIES DISPUTE, SUPPORT FOR ICELAND'S NATO MEMBERSHIP AND OUR MILITARY PRESENCE WAS VISIBLY ERODED.

2. OBJECTIVES: PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON'S OBJECTIVE IN MEETING WITH YOU AT KEFLAVIK WILL BE TO SEEK ASSURANCES FROM THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THAT THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO ATTACH HIGH PRIORITY TO (A) GOOD RELATIONS WITH ICELAND (B) THE IMPORTANCE OF ICELAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO AND (C) OUR INTENTION TO FULFILL OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE 1974 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREED MINUTE (SUMMARY OF 1974 MOU AT PARA 4).

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ALTHOUGH HALLGRIMSSON REGARDS THIS AS A COURTESY MEETING, HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO REFER IN GENERAL TERMS TO PENDING ICELANDIC REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE AND DESCRIBE THE BROAD CONTEXT IN WHICH HE HOPES THE USG WOULD VIEW THOSE REQUESTS.

YOUR OBJECTIVES AT THIS MEETING WILL BE TO ASSURE HALLGRIMSSON OF OUR DESIRE FOR CLOSE BILATERAL RELATIONS AND OUR BELIEF IN ICELAND'S SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY OF THE WEST. ON THE QUESTION OF PENDING ICELANDIC REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE, YOU COULD INDICATE -- IF ASKED -- THAT WE FULLY INTEND TO LIVE UP TO THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE 1974 MOU WITHOUT GETTING INTO ANY OF THE SPECIFIC ISSUES AT STAKE. FINALLY YOU MIGHT WISH TO BRIEF HALLGRIMSSON ON THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR TRIP TO DATE WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE US COMMITMENT TO NATO.

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3. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

-- I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ATTACHES HIGH PRIORITY TO CONTINUED EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH ICELAND AND TO ICELANDIC MEMBERSHIP IN NATO.

-- THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON IS FULLY COGNIZANT OF THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ICELAND TO NATO AND THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS THE ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE MAKES TO THE SECURITY OF THE WEST.

-- I HOPE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT ICELAND, TO SEE SOME OF THE COUNTRY AND MEET THE PEOPLE
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DURING MY TENURE AS VICE PRESIDENT. YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT I MYSELF AM OF NORDIC ANCESTRY.

-- (IF QUESTION OF ASSISTANCE TO ICELAND RAISED BY ICELANDIC SIDE) I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT WE ARE ANXIOUS TO LIVE UP TO THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCLUDED BY OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS IN 1974; I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT WE HAVE BEEN MAKING PROGRESS WITH AMBASSADOR ANDERSEN IN WASHINGTON ON THIS SCORE.

4. SUMMARY OF 1974 MOU AND AGREED MINUTE

THE 1974 MOU IS A CONTINUATION OF THE ORIGINAL 1951 DEFENSE AGREEMENT WHICH GRANTED US THE USE OF FACILITIES AT KEFLAVIK FOR THE "ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE." IN THE MOU, THE US AGREED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AND, WHEN FEASIBLE, TO REPLACE THEM WITH ICELANDIC CIVILIANS. SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO HOUSING ALL US PERSONNEL ON THE BASE ITSELF AND TO ADOPTING MUTUALLY AGREED MEASURES TO SEPARATE THE CIVILIAN AIR TERMINAL FROM BASE FACILITIES. FINALLY, WE ARE OBLIGATED TO UPGRADE THE KEFLAVIK AIRFIELD TO ICAO CATEGORY II STANDARDS OVER A 10 YEAR PERIOD.

AN AGREED MINUTE, ADOPTED SIMULTANEOUSLY DURING THE 1974 DISCUSSIONS, CALLS UPON THE US TO REDUCE MILITARY PERSONNEL BY 420, TO SEEK APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ON-BASE HOUSING UNITS AND

TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF ACQUIRING AN ICELANDIC

GEOTHERMAL HEATING SYSTEM FOR THE BASE. THE
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AGREED MINUTE ALSO COMMITS THE US TO EXPLORE
FURTHER COOPERATION IN THE SEPARATION OF FACILITIES,
INCLUDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW TERMINAL
COMPLEX, AS WELL AS COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ICELAND
DEFENSE FORCE AND THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD, CIVIL
DEFENSE AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES.

5. BIOGRAPHIC PROFILES:

GEIR HALLGRIMSSON (GARE HAHL-GREEM-SON), PRIME
MINISTER OF ICELAND, ADDRESSED AS MR. PRIME MINISTER.
51 YEARS OLD, PRIME MINISTER SINCE AUGUST 1974.
FOLLOWED CLASSIC INDEPENDENCE PARTY PATH TO NATIONAL
LEADERSHIP: MEMBER AND PRESIDENT OF PARTY YOUTH
WING, REYKJAVIK CITY COUNCIL, MAYOR OF REYKJAVIK
(1960), MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (1970), PARTY VICE
CHAIRMAN (1971), AND CHAIRMAN (1973). LAWYER BY
PROFESSION, HALLGRIMSSON HAS LONG BEEN ACTIVE IN
FAMILY'S LARGE AND PROSPEROUS IMPORT-EXPORT BUSINESS
AND STILL HAS INTERESTS IN FIRM. DID GRADUATE
STUDY AT HARVARD IN 1948-49. HALLGRIMSSON IS
MARRIED AND HAS FOUR CHILDREN. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH
WELL. HALLGRIMSSON IS STAUNCHLY PRO-US AND PRO-
NATO AND ONE OF ICELAND'S MOST OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATES
OF NEED FOR US-MANNED DEFENSE FORCE HERE. THOUGH
KNOWN AS A SKILLED POLITICIAN AND ADMINISTRATOR
AND RESPECTED FOR HIS COURAGE AND INTEGRITY, HE IS
NOT A STRONG NATIONAL LEADER AND IS OFTEN COMPARED
UNFAVORABLY WITH DYNAMIC IP LEADERS OF THE PAST.

AS PRIME MINISTER, HE HAS HEADED A GOVERNMENT THAT
CLAIMS THE MILESTONE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WINNING
RECOGNITION OF A 200-MILE FISHERIES JURISDICTION
AND THEREBY GUARANTEEING ICELANDIC CONTROL OVER
RESOURCES VITAL TO THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE. GOVERNMENT
HAS ALSO MADE SOME PROGRESS IN CORRECTING SEVERE
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ECONOMIC ILLS THAT FACED IT IN 1974. ECONOMY

HOWEVER, IS FAR FROM HEALTHY AND STANDS TO DOMINATE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION THROUGH REMAINDER OF TERM IN OFFICE.

HENRIK BJORNSSON (BYORN-SON), PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, ADDRESSED AS MR. AMBASSADOR. 62 YEARS OLD, HAS HELD CURRENT POST

AS RANKING CAREER OFFICIAL IN FOREIGN MINISTRY SINCE EARLY 1976. (HE ALSO HELD THE SAME POSITION BETWEEN 1956 AND 1961). A CAREER DIPLOMAT SINCE 1939; SERVED IN WASHINGTON 1942-44; AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED KINGDOM 1961-65; AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE 1965-76. SON OF ICELAND'S FIRST PRESIDENT. MARRIED AND HAS THREE CHILDREN. SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL.

BJORN BJARNASON (BYORN BYAR-NA-SON), DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL IN OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER. ADDRESSED AS MR. BJARNASON. 32 YEARS OLD, HAS BEEN IN CURRENT POSITION, WHICH CARRIES SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SINCE 1974. EX-JOURNALIST, LONG ACTIVE IN INDEPENDENCE PARTY POLITICS; ONE OF RELATIVELY FEW ICELANDERS REGARDED AS FOREIGN/SECURITY AFFAIRS SPECIALIST. SON OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER THE LATE BJARNI BENEDIKTSSON. MARRIED TO ONE OF COUNTRY'S LEADING CONCERT VIOLINISTS, ONE CHILD. SPEAKS ENGLISH WELL, IF SOMEWHAT HESITATINGLY.

6. FOR CONDAYAN: PLEASE PROVIDE PROTOCOL LISTING OF OFFICIAL PARTY TO EMBASSY REYKJAVIK, INFO COPY TO DEPARTMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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BACKGROUND PAPER PR
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